



A Message From The Secretary

Happy New Year and Happy Birthday KDHE !

As we enter this new fiscal year, it is appropriate to acknowledge the creation of KDHE as a department 30 years ago. It is also important that we be reminded of the rich Kansas public health tradition and the many contributions of public health pioneer, Dr. Samuel Crumbine. Because of the

leadership of Dr. Crumbine, the first Secretary of the Kansas Board of Health, Kansas enjoyed one of the best public health systems in the world. It is fitting that we give serious consideration to assessing what it would take to reclaim that status.

Over the past year and a half I have met with many KDHE staff during roundtable sessions to get a better idea of the concerns and ideas employees have for the agency, and through this process I have had the opportunity to get to know many of you better. I recently had the chance to visit two of our district offices to host regional roundtables for KDHE staff who work very hard to serve our agency in district offices. While some, usually those who have never attended, might view these roundtables as "gripe sessions" I assure you they have been very constructive and productive. I look forward to continuing this process and hearing from each of you.

As a result of the many roundtable discussions, our agency has moved forward with several initiatives to try to improve KDHE's internal and external processes including communication and service. From this process, we will provide a new resource in the Public Information Office where we will have an individual available to translate agency materials into Spanish and also translate Spanish documents for staff. As our Hispanic population increases statewide, we believe this is a necessary resource and will also be able to provide a training resource for staff that wish to learn more Spanish because of their role in the agency.

In an effort to improve internal and external communications, we will also be implementing a new web review process. Our Web site is a wonderful resource to use both internally and externally to communicate the many things we do. We are in the process of reviewing the site to determine how it can be improved as well as to include the Public Information Office in making the site as user-friendly as possible. More details will be coming soon regarding this effort.

Two important issues we are currently dealing with as an agency are West Nile Virus and air quality. West Nile Virus has been found in Sedgwick County this year, and we expect it to spread across the state quickly as it did last year about this time. Please take precautions and tell others of the importance of using an insect repellent with DEET, draining standing water, and using larvicides in water that can't be drained. Recently the Environmental Protection Agency announced Kansas is complying with a federal regulation that limits the amount of fine-particle air pollution. We must continue to improve our air quality in Kansas, and are pleased that we meet these standards.

The Fourth of July reminds us all of the freedoms we enjoy each day. These freedoms did not come without a price. Nor will they be retained without continued sacrifice. As we approach this holiday weekend, it is important to remember those who have fought for our freedoms here and abroad, and the many military members currently serving our country. This holiday is an important time to reflect on their courageous efforts and what we are willing to do to secure the promises of democracy.

Be safe and Happy Fourth!